

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 02539 011818Z

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SUBJ: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS - FURTHER RETURNS AND
OBSERVATIONS

REF ATHENS 2474

1. SUMMARY. CONTINUING RETURNS CONFIRM THAT MUNICIPAL CANDIDATES IN LARGER CITIES WHO HAD IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT FROM OPPOSITION PARTIES SIGNIFICANTLY OUTPOLLED CANDIDATES WITH CONSERVATIVE OR NON-PARTISAN IMAGE. THIS IS MOST OBVIOUS IN ATHENS WHERE A NOT VERY EXCITING CANDIDATE OF THE TRADITIONAL LEFT WON IN THE FIRST ROUND WITH 53 PERCENT. SINCE THE OPPOSITION PARTIES DID NOT WORK PARTICULARLY HARD TO DEVELOP ISSUES OR GET OUT THE VOTE, THE TREND SEEMS TO BE SYMBOLIC OF A PRIOR AND UNDERLYING POLITICAL AFFINITY TOWARD THE CENTER/LEFT AMONG, AT LEAST, URBAN VOTERS. END SUMMARY.

2. OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS DREW COMPATIBLE, THOUGH DIFFERENT, MORALS FROM THE RESULTS OF MARCH 30 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS: CU/NF LEADER MAVROS SAID THAT THE BIG
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PAGE 02 ATHENS 02539 011818Z

MAJORITIES GIVEN TO THE "DEMOCRATIC SLATES" INDICATE THE

GREEK PEOPLE'S WILL HAS CHANGED SINCE NOVEMBER 17 AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT CAN NO LONGER CITE ITS CIRCUMSTANTIAL VICTORY THEN AS GROUNDS FOR PUSHING A CONSTITUTION WHICH THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE DO NOT ACCEPT. PASOK PRESIDENT PAPANDREOU SAID "THE PEOPLE YESTERDAY...LAID STRONG FOUNDATIONS FOR THE MARCH TOWARD COMPLETE DEJUNTIZATION, NONALIGNED PEOPLE'S SOVEREIGNTY AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE". EDA AND KKE-INTERIOR CIRCLES SAID THE RESULTS CONFIRM THE PEOPLE'S FIRM ORIENTATION TOWARD STRENGTHENING AND BROADENING DEMOCRACY AS WELL AS THEIR DESIRE TO SPEED UP THE PURGE OVER WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HESITATES.

3. GOG WAS NOT SLOW TO CRITICIZE OPPOSITION FOR ITS CHEST THUMPING. OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN NOTED THAT AS RECENTLY AS WEEK AGO OPPOSITION HAD DENIED THAT ELECTION RESULTS COULD HAVE A POLITICAL CHARACTER, WHICH IS INCONSISTENT WITH "SUBSEQUENT OPPOSITION EFFORT TO DRAW POLITICAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESULTS WHICH EMERGED FROM AN INVISIBLE POPULAR FRONT." IN A SEPARATE STATEMENT MININTERIOR STEFANOPOULOS COMMENDED OFFICIAL PERSONNEL FOR CARRYING OUT IMPECCABLE LOCAL ELECTIONS.

4. NEARLY COMPLETE RETURNS FROM MAJOR CITIES CONFIRM EARLIER CONCLUSIONS (REFTEL) WITH EXCEPTION THAT IN PIRAEUS KYRIAKAKOS MOVED INTO SECOND PLACE WITH A LEAD OF A FEW HUNDRED OVER LEOUSIS. THE RUN-OFF THERE WILL THEREBY PIT TWO COMMUNIST CANDIDATES AGAINST EACH OTHER. PAPATHEODOROU CONTINUES TO HOLD 53.50 PERCENT OF THE ATHENIAN VOTE AND ANOTHER OPPOSITION-BACKED CANDIDATE, ANINNOS DREW 71 PERCENT IN PATRAS. THE LATTER WIN IS PARTICULARLY EMBARRASSING TO MININT STEFANOPOULOS, DEPUTY FROM PATRAS AND POLITICAL ENEMY OF ANINNOS. OPPOSITION SUPPORTED SLATES ALSO WON CLEAR MAJORITIES IN SEVERAL MAJOR PROVINCIAL CITIES SUCH AS LARISSA, IRAKLEON AND VOLOS ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY HIGH ABSTENTION RATES IN SOME OF THESE CITIES QUALIFY THE IMPACT OF THE WIN. ALTHOUGH MAJOR CITIES AVERAGED RESPECTABLE 75 PERCENT TURNOUT, MANY PROVINCIAL TOWNS AND ISLANDS HAD HIGH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ATHENS 02539 011818Z

ABSTENTION RATE.

5. COMMENT. THE URBAN RESULTS SUGGEST THE GREEK ELECTORATE MAY BE OVERALL MORE TO THE CENTER/LEFT THAN LAST NOVEMBER'S GENERAL ELECTIONS INDICATED. THE APATHY REGARDING SUNDAY'S ELECTIONS AND THE LACKLUSTER PERFORMANCE OF THE PARTIES IN ORGANIZING FOR IT SUGGEST THAT THE OPPOSITION IS EXPLOITING ELECTION RESULTS IN ITS FAVOR WHICH

ARE TO A DEGREE CIRCUMSTANTIAL AND AMBIGUOUS. THE CENTER/LEFT
POLITICAL FORCES CAN TAKE RENEWED HOPE IN THE
RESULTS WHICH COULD PROMPT FUTURE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS.
MANY OF THEIR SUPPORTES NOW HAVE JOBS AND THE IMBALANCE
AGAINST THEM IN PARLIAMENT IS CORRECTED SOMEWHAT BY THE
FAILURE OF CONSERVATIVES AS SUCH TO DO WELL AT THE LOCAL
LEVEL. EVEN THOUGH SPECIFIC NATIONAL ISSUES SUCH AS THE DRAFT
CONSTITUTION AND DEJUNTIZATION DID NOT FEATURE IN THE
LOCAL CAMPAIGNS, THE MINORITY PARTIES CAN BE EXPECTED TO
TRY TO MAKE POLITICAL HAY FROM THE RESULTS. CARAMANLIS'
TACTIC OF TRYING TO MAKE LOCAL ELECTIONS NON-PARTISAN
WAS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE MAJORITY OF URBAN VOTERS.
WHETHER IT WAS A POOR TACTIC IS SOMETHING THE ANALYSTS
AND EDITORIALISTS DO NOT AGREE UPON. CONSERVATIVE
CANDIDATES MIGHT HAVE FARED EVEN WORSE IF THE GOVERNMENT
HAD SOUGHT TO CLARIFY RATHER THAN OBFUSCATE POLITICAL
LABELS IN THIS ELECTION. THE EXTENT OF AN ANTI-CARAMANLIS
REACTION BY ROYALISTS IS GIVEN PROMINENT PLAY BY SOME
COMMENTATORS. GOVERNMENT CRITICS WILL INTERPRET
THE RESULTS AS SHOWING CARAMANLIS LOSING SUPPORT AND THAT
THESE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS MAY MARK A PUBLIC AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL TURNING AGAINST HIS MIRACLE WORKER
CREDENTIALS. IT IS ANYONE'S GUESS WHETHER CARAMANLIS
WILL INTERPRET THE RESULTS TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY
CAUSE HIM TO TRIM SAIL OR CHANGE COURSE. KUBISCH

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